

# Jackie Robinson, Baseball Player



*A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.*

1 Every year on April 15th, players in the Major League Baseball (MLB) honor Jackie Robinson by wearing his number, 42. He is remembered as a great baseball player. He is honored for his role of desegregating the league.

2 Jackie Robinson grew up in Pasadena, California with his mother and his four siblings--Mack, Frank, Edgar, and Willa Milla. Jackie was always good in sports. During high school he was a star in football, basketball, and baseball.

3 After high school, Jackie went to Pasadena Junior College. He later transferred to UCLA. Jackie was the first athlete at the university to earn varsity letters in football, baseball, basketball, and track. Unfortunately, in the last semester of his senior year, Jackie had to drop out of college. Times were tough, and Jackie did not have the money for tuition. He took a job as an athletic administrator. Later, he played for a semi-professional football team in Hawaii.

4 Then the United States entered WWII. Jackie was drafted into the U.S. Army. He would serve in the army from 1942-1944. In 1944 he was honorably discharged from the army and took a job coaching basketball at a college in Texas.

5 In 1945, Jackie joined the Baseball Negro League. He was signed to play for the Kansas City Monarchs.

6 In 1945, Major League Baseball was segregated. This meant that it only allowed white players to participate in games. But many people, like Branch Rickey, the manager and president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, wanted this to change. Rickey wanted the best players to play in the MLB. He wanted the MLB

to become integrated, allowing athletes of any ethnicity to play baseball.

7 Rickey knew that the person he chose to help integrate baseball would have to have certain characteristics. He wanted someone who would not fight back or use angry words when they were called names. He wanted someone who could be honorable. When he met Jackie, Rickey knew that Jackie was the man for the job.

8 Jackie was signed to the Dodgers in 1946. His first season he played in the minor leagues. The following year, on April 15, he joined the Dodgers as their first basemen. Many people were angry that a Black man was playing in the MLB. They threw things at Jackie when he was up at bat, and they called Jackie names. But Jackie never responded in anger. He just played the game. Slowly, things began to change.

9 Jackie had a great career in baseball. In 1947, he was voted Rookie of the Year. In 1949, he was the MVP in the league. Jackie was an All-Star player from 1949-1954. He retired from the league in 1957.

10 After retiring from baseball, Jackie Robinson became a business executive at the coffee company, Chock Full O'Nuts. He also helped start the Freedom Bank, a bank for African Americans. Jackie also wrote for the *New York Post* and *Amsterdam News*. Jackie continued to participate in the Civil Rights Movement. He worked with the NAACP, an organization that fought against racism and discrimination. He also worked with Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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1. How does the following quote relate to Jackie Robinson's life?

A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.

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2. Why do you think it was important that Jackie not respond in anger to the people who threw things at him and called him names?

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3. What did Jackie Robinson do after his baseball career ended that showed he was still committed to making the United States a better place for Blacks?

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4. Summarize the life of Jackie Robinson in 3-5 sentences.

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